

'Communication for Life' is theme for Better Hearing and Speech Month in May

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The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) observes May as Better Hearing and Speech Month (BHSM) in recognition of the more than 42 million Americans of all ages who have communication disorders. This yearly observance provides opportunities to raise awareness about communication disorders and to promote treatment that can improve the fundamental quality of life for those who experience problems with speaking, understanding, or hearing. Communication disorders include hearing loss, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), and difficulty with swallowing or balance, stuttering, delayed language, or voice problems.

Research Says:

- 28 million people in the U.S. suffer from hearing loss
- 14 million people in the U.S. have a speech and/or language disorder
- Hearing loss is the most common congenital disorder in newborns
- Ten percent of children entering the first grade have a moderate to severe speech disorder, including stuttering
- Approximately one million people in the U.S. have aphasia, a language disorder inhibiting spoken communication that results from damage caused by a stroke or other traumatic injury to the language centers of the brain

Awareness and early intervention are critical for prevention and successful treatment of communication problems. For children, communication skills lay the foundation for successful learning and achievement in life. Information on Better Hearing and Speech Month, including a screensaver and a children's banner for coloring, are available and can be downloaded free of charge from ASHA's Web site at:

http://www.asha.org/public/BHSM_download_2003.htm

Consumers can also send a BHSM e-card containing both the screensaver and banner or use the "Send to a Friend" link at the top right corner of the page.

For more information on BHSM, communication disorders, or referral to an ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist or audiologist, consumers may call 1-800-638-8255 (Spanish-speaking operators available) or go to www.asha.org.